Medieval monasticism was not uniform and monolithic. Even after the ninth-century adoption of the Rule of Benedict as the standard for most monasteries throughout the Carolingian Empire, there was wide variation in its practice. The eleventh to the thirteenth centuries, a time of especially great religious ferment, saw the growth of a number of movements seeking to reform monastic practice, to make it more ascetic, more “true” to the *Regula Benedicti*. In the early thirteenth century, the Franciscan and Dominican Friars were the agents of reform, and many historians see the Friars as a watershed in the history of religious life in the Middle Ages. Yet when Francis of Assisi was only eleven years old, when the creation of the Franciscan life was barely an idea, monasticism in Burgundy experienced another reform. This was the foundation of the Caulite Order.

The Caulites founded their first monastery in 1193, roughly a century after the advent of the Cistercians, barely two decades before the advent of the Franciscans. The order, also referred to as the Valliscaulians, was named for the site of this first monastery in Val-des-Choux or “valley of cabbages,” located in the Châtillon forest, some twelve kilometers southeast of the town of Châtillon-sur-Seine in northwest Burgundy. The most important benefactor of the order was Odo III, duke of Burgundy. The order’s spiritual founder was a certain Viard, sometimes called Guy or Guido, who, according to eighteenth-century mémoires of the order, was a former Carthusian lay brother. The Caulite Order received papal approval in 1205. It expanded in the first half of the thirteenth century, growing to some seventeen houses in France (mostly Burgundy), three in Scotland, one in what is today the Netherlands – some historians have even suggested Spain and Portugal – and founding its last monastery in 1267. The order lasted almost six centuries, but reduced numbers (both of monks and properties) forced the Caulites in 1764 to unite with, and be governed by, the Cistercian abbey of Sept-Fons, in the Bourbonnais region of France. They experienced a brief revival in the late eighteenth century, but then disappeared, in the wake of the French Revolution.

The Caulites were innovators in monastic practice: they expanded throughout a broad region in western Europe, and counted among their benefactors important noble families of their day. Yet they remain obscure in the historiography of medieval monasticism. It is time for this state of affairs to change.
New Monks in Old Habits

The Formation of the Caulite Monastic Order, 1193–1267

PHILLIP C. ADAMO

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MANUFACTURED IN CANADA
For all the monks who have been in my life
Contents

Acknowledgments ix
List of Figures x
Abbreviations xi
Chronology xiii

INTRODUCTION 1

CHAPTER ONE The Sources 12

CHAPTER TWO The Spiritual Founder 27

CHAPTER THREE The Other Founder? 53

CHAPTER FOUR The Caulite Ideal, Economic Realities, and Social Relations 67

CHAPTER FIVE Caulite Foundations 93

CHAPTER SIX The Caulite Customary 121

CHAPTER SEVEN Organization of the Caulite Order 138

CHAPTER EIGHT The Monastery at Val-des-Choux 166

EPILOGUE Long ago, on the road to Val-des-Choux ... 201
viii | Contents

APPENDIX A 211
Important Texts Concerning the Caulite Order

APPENDIX B 217
Analysis of the Caulite Customary

Bibliography 225
Index 247
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List of Figures

Figure 1.1: Seal of the prior of Vausse
Figure 4.1: The seignorial zone of Val-des-Choux
Figure 5.1: Geographic distribution of Caulite Priories
Figure 5.2: The church at Val-Saint-Benoît
Figure 5.3: Funerary relief of Gauthier of Sully, Épinac, Château de Sully, c.1240
Figure 5.4: The church at Pluscarden
Figure 5.5: The church at Vausse
Figure 5.6: Remains of the church at La Genevroye
Figure 5.7: Remains of the church at Épeau
Figure 6.1: Tomb of Odo IV’s children with Caulite monks in procession, c. 1320
Figure 7.1: Seal of the prior of Val-des-Choux
Figure 7.2: Filial relationships of Caulite Priories
Figure 8.1: Chambure’s rendering of the ruins at Val-des-Choux
Figure 8.2: “Monastère du Val-des-Choux”
Figure 8.3: Plan of Val-des-Choux, 13th century
Figure 8.4: Plan of Val-des-Choux, 2014
Figure 8.5: The cloister at Vausse
Abbreviations

AD Archives départementales
AN Archives nationales
BM Bibliothèque municipale
BnF Bibliothèque nationale de France


Innocent III (1210) Innocent III’s bull of 10 May 1210 (“sexto idus Maii, pontificatus nostri anno tertio decimo”). Moulins, AD de l’Allier, H 222 contains the original charter created for Val-des-Choux. Published in *OCVC*, 142–143.

xii | Abbreviations


Peincédé Dijon, AD de la Côte d’Or, Jean-Baptiste Peincédé, Inventaire de la chambre des comptes de Bourgogne (unpublished manuscript from the end of the 18th century), 36 vols.


UC Usus conversorum, cited from Cistercian Lay Brothers: Twelfth-Century Usages with Related Texts, ed. Chrysogonus Waddell, Citeaux: Commentarii cistercienses; Studia et Documenta 10 (Brecht, Belgium; Citeaux: Commentarii cistercienses, 2000).
Chronology

C. 1080 Bruno of Cologne founds the Carthusian Order
1098 Robert of Molesme founds Citeaux
1172 Gautier, bishop of Langres, founds the Carthusian monastery of Lugny
1192 Odo III becomes duke of Burgundy
1193 Viard enters the church at Val-des-Choux; foundation of the Caulite Order
1202–1204 Fourth Crusade
1205 Pope Innocent III confirms the Caulite Order
1205–24 Range of dates for the Caulite adoption of the Rule of Benedict
1209–29 Albigensian Crusade
1209 Innocent III approves the Franciscan Order
1212 Theodoric of Horn founds the Caulite priory of Sankt-Elisabeth’s-Thal
1213–21 Fifth Crusade
1214 Hervé de Donzy founds the Caulite priory of Épeau
1214–22 Range of dates for the foundation of the Caulite priory of Reveillon
1214–1300 Range of dates for the foundation of the Caulite priory of Beaulieu
1215 Fourth Lateran Council
1216 William of Mont-Saint-Jean founds the Caulite priory of Val-Crois-sant; Gauthier of Vignory founds the Caulite priory of Genevroye
1218 Odo III dies
1219 Anseric V founds the Caulite priory of Vausse; Simon of Châteauvil-lain founds the Caulite priory of Vauclair
C. 1222 Thibaut IV, count of Champagne and Brie and well-known trouvère, founds the Caulite priory of Clairlieu
1224 Pope Honorius III allows Caulites to mitigate their practice; the Caulites adopt the Cistercian Ecclesiastica officia; John of Montréal and his wife, Nicholette of Magny, found the Caulite priory of Petit-Saint-Lieu
C. 1224 Jacques de Vitry visits Val-des-Choux
1228–1229 Sixth Crusade
1229 Hugh of La Fauche founds the Caulite priory of Rémonvaux
1230 Alexander II, king of Scotland, founds the Caulite priories of Pluscarden and Beauly; Duncan MacDougal founds the Caulite priory of Ardchattan
1234–1270 Range of dates for Thibaut IV, king of Navarre’s, foundation of the Caulite priory of Beaupré
1237 Gauthier of Sully and his wife Oda, and son William found the Caulite priory of Val-Saint-Benoît
1245–1250 Seventh Crusade
c. 1248 Hugh IV, duke of Burgundy, founds the Caulite priory of Val-Duc
1249 John of Toucy founds the Caulite priory of Plein-Marchais
1255 Louis IX, king of France, founds the Caulite priory of Royal Pré
c. 1260 John of Châteauvillain founds the Caulite priory of Uchon
1267 Thibaut V, count of Champagne, founds the Caulite priory of Val-Dieu